

# U.S. Country Commercial Guides



## Turkmenistan 2020

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## Doing Business in Turkmenistan

### Market Overview

Turkmenistan is a physically large country (slightly larger than the state of California) but sparsely inhabited. The Turkmen government reports a population of 6 million people, but this number is widely viewed as inflated; most estimates are closer to 4 million. Although Turkmenistan's vast natural gas and oil resources continue to attract some foreign companies, the Government of Turkmenistan has yet to implement reforms needed to create an inviting business climate where foreign investment is truly welcomed and property rights are guaranteed. In addition, the government is centralized and non-transparent, with much information that is readily available in most other countries classified as a "state secret." Turkmenistan publishes limited national statistics, but its data collection and evaluation methodologies are often not credible. According to official government figures, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), using the official exchange rate of 3.5 TMT/1 USD was \$40.76 billion in 2018 (TMT 142.7 billion), \$38 billion in 2017 (TMT 133 billion), and \$36.18 billion (TMT 126.6 billion) in 2016. An official number for 2019 GDP was not yet available, though the government reported an implausibly high GDP growth of 6.2 percent in 2019. GDP growth in 2018 was reported as 6.5 percent. Most economic indicators released by the government are widely seen as unreliable. The black market exchange rate in 2019 and early 2020 hovered at five to seven times the official rate.

Turkmenistan continues to be a major producer and exporter of natural gas. According to the *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020*, Turkmenistan produced 63.2 billion cubic meters (bcm) of natural gas in 2019, a slight increase over its 2018 production of 61.5 bcm. Roughly half of Turkmenistan's natural gas production is used domestically and the remainder is exported. China is by far Turkmenistan's biggest gas customer, importing 33.2 bcm of Turkmen gas in 2019. Russia suspended its Turkmen gas imports entirely from January 2016 to April 2019 over a pricing dispute and now buys only low volumes of gas from Turkmenistan. Exports to Iran, Turkmenistan's only other significant market, have been suspended since January 2017, also due to a dispute over pricing.

According to UN Comtrade data and International Trade Centre statistics, Turkmenistan's total exports rose from \$10.1 billion in 2018 to \$10.3 billion in 2019, while imports fell from \$2.8 billion in 2018 to \$2.7 billion in 2019. The trade surplus, therefore, was reportedly \$7.6 billion in 2019 and \$7.3 billion in 2018.

In 2019 Turkmenistan's largest import partner was Turkey, followed closely by Russia. Turkmenistan's largest export partner after China is Turkey. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019 U.S. exports to Turkmenistan totaled \$28.3 million, down from \$30.9 million in 2018, while U.S. imports from Turkmenistan were \$16.2 million, up from \$11.5 million in 2018. The top U.S. exports to Turkmenistan in 2019 were agricultural machines and chemical products. The top U.S. imports from Turkmenistan were miscellaneous carbon products and vegetable extracts.

The top four reasons why U.S. companies may want to consider exporting to Turkmenistan include Turkmenistan's readiness to import innovative technologies and equipment, plans to diversify its economy, strategic geographic location between the Middle East, Europe and Asia, and political stability.

President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, first elected in 2007 and re-elected in 2012 and 2017, initially promised to open up the country and improve its investment climate, but these promises remain unfulfilled. Turkmenistan does not allow private ownership of land, and most of its industries are state-owned. The government provides subsidies in key sectors such as agriculture. State subsidies to the general public for utilities including natural gas, electricity, and water were eliminated in January 2019. According to official figures from the Turkmen government, the private sector share of the economy has reached 70 percent. This figure cannot be independently verified, however, and does not include the hydrocarbon sector, which makes up an estimated 35 percent or more of GDP. Retail trade, services, processing and production are the main sectors in which private ownership is permitted, although sometimes with government-set price controls. In 2012, Turkmenistan announced plans to privatize state-held properties under the State Program for Privatization of Enterprises and Objects of State Property. However, the process has so far proceeded slowly with few buyers willing to meet the government's asking prices. A limited number of foreign petroleum companies successfully operate under production sharing agreements (PSAs).

Turkmenistan's economy is centrally managed and many business decisions appear politically motivated. Turkmenistan devalued its national currency – the manat (TMT) – by 19 percent on January 1, 2015, to an exchange rate of 3.5 TMT/1 USD. Between 2008 and 2014, the rate was 2.85 TMT/1 USD. Converting manat into U.S. dollars (or other hard currencies) is extremely difficult due to tight government restrictions on exchange. The black market exchange rate in 2019 was relatively steady at 18 TMT/1 USD but became more volatile during the COVID-19 pandemic, at times spiking to 25 TMT/1 USD. The government does not release information about its hard currency reserves. Lower global energy prices have slowed Turkmenistan's economy and put downward pressure on its currency, as has its persistent current account deficit. In January 2016, the government eliminated consumers' easy access to hard currency and placed limitations on currency conversion, which has impeded trade and led to extra hurdles for businesses. In recent years, U.S. businesses have reported increasing difficulties converting manat into U.S. dollars. Currency conversion usually requires a company (or individual) to receive specific approval from a government bank and even then is usually limited to as little as 1.5-2% of the value of the company's bank account.

Turkmenistan has maintained a stable political environment since independence in 1991. The president is both the head of state and the head of government. Presidential decrees and resolutions have the force of law and often supersede existing legislation. The ruling Democratic Party is the re-branded Communist Party of Turkmenistan. After the Parliament adopted a new law on political parties in January 2012, a second political party drawn from the membership of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, the Party of the Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, was established. A third political party, the Agrarian Party, was established in September 2014. While the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs purports to represent the business interests of private entrepreneurs, it is quasi-governmental and its creation, like that of the Agrarian Party, has had virtually no effect on political decision making. The president, first and foremost, dominates the political arena. The Democratic Party and other parties play minor supporting roles.

### **Market Challenges**

- Lack of consistent, transparent business legislation and sanctity of contracts.
- Laws and regulations are subject to frequent change and contradictory interpretation by various government agencies and officials.
- The judicial branch operates under direct instruction from the executive.
- Corruption is pervasive and endemic at all levels of the business stream.
- Qualified employees, particularly those with English language skills, are scarce.
- Turkmenistan's labor force generally lacks knowledge of standard Western business practices.
- The Agency for Protection from Economic Risks, under the Ministry of Finance and Economy, holds a wide mandate to vet foreign companies before issuing licenses allowing operation in Turkmenistan.
- The economy appears to have been in recession or stagnant since the last quarter of 2014 when global hydrocarbon prices fell.
- Foreign businesses in Turkmenistan face steep barriers to collecting on bills owed by government ministries.
- Companies face tight foreign exchange controls.
- Turkmenistan's visa procedures are exceptionally cumbersome and time-consuming.
- Unreliable internet access and slow download and upload speeds can hinder business. The Government of Turkmenistan regularly blocks certain mainstream websites and private companies' Virtual Private Networks (VPN).

- Most industry is controlled by the government and formal communication (e.g., the transmission of documents) is slow, as it typically must be conducted via diplomatic notes to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Market Opportunities**

- The hydrocarbon sector is the country's largest industry. Turkmenistan strives to maximize value for its oil and gas reserves and invests in petroleum refining and processing facilities. It has several liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) plants and plans to build more.
- The government has plans to attract foreign technology and investment to the chemical and petrochemical industries.
- Turkmenistan wants to make the transition to a digital economy, which may present opportunities for foreign companies with expertise in digital technologies.
- Opportunities exist for gas-to-liquid (GTL) technology providers, as Turkmenistan recently built a major GTL plant and plans to develop this sector.
- With development of new gas and oil fields and the rehabilitation of existing fields, there is a need for new pipeline networks and related infrastructure, such as compressor stations.
- The government has ambitious plans to build new transportation infrastructure.
- Turkmenistan continues to invest in development of the Caspian Sea resort of Awaza, which may present opportunities for foreign investment in Turkmenistan's nascent tourism industry. More generally, historic sites associated with the ancient Silk Road represent untapped potential for small adventure tour operators.

### **Market Entry Strategy**

- Due to a lack of accurate and comprehensive information on market sectors, company assessment visits are useful.
- Identifying and working through a local partner or agent is often vital for successful market entry.

## Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

There are limited opportunities for U.S. exporters interested in the Turkmen market. The Turkmen government has a reputation for non-payment of its contracts with international firms, in some cases going several million or even billion dollars into arrears. However, opportunities exist in certain areas. Below are the main sectors that historically have attracted foreign companies to Turkmenistan.

### Oil and Gas

#### Overview

Turkmenistan is rich in hydrocarbon resources. According to official figures, Turkmenistan's resource base is approximately 71.64 billion tons of oil equivalent, including 53 billion tons located in onshore fields and 18.21 billion tons in the Caspian Sea. The *BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2020* indicates that Turkmenistan has 600 million barrels of proven oil reserves and 19.5 trillion cubic meters in proven reserves of natural gas. According to the same report, Turkmenistan produced 63.2 bcm of natural gas in 2019; of that, Turkmenistan consumed 31.5 bcm domestically and exported 31.6 bcm to China. Oil production in 2019 reached 264,000 barrels per day. Turkmenistan consumes roughly 60 percent of its oil production domestically and exports the remainder over the Caspian Sea to world markets. The Turkmenbashi Complex of Oil Refineries and the gas-to-gasoline plant in Ahal province produce liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), though no official data on production is available.

#### Leading Sub-Sectors

Modern geological exploration technologies; seismic imaging software; drilling equipment and pipes; field development equipment; well rehabilitation services; offshore production equipment and services.

#### Opportunities

Exploration and development of oil and natural gas fields, especially Galkynysh (formerly South Yoloten), Osman, Minara, Tagtabazar-I, Caspian Sea offshore blocks, and the Central Karakum group of fields. Construction of gas treatment and processing units at the above mentioned fields. Opportunities also exist for gas-to-liquid (GTL) technology providers as Turkmenistan **is currently expanding production capacity in this sector.**

#### Web Resources

[NEBIT-GAZ \(http://www.oilgas.gov.tm/en/\)](http://www.oilgas.gov.tm/en/)

## **Oil and Natural Gas Refining**

### **Overview**

There are two oil refineries in Turkmenistan: one in Turkmenbashi and one in Seydi. The Turkmenbashi oil refinery has a refining capacity of more than 10 million tons of oil per year as of May 2016. The refinery produces a range of products, including unleaded gasoline, petroleum coke, road bitumen, laundry detergent, hydro-treated diesel, and lube oil. The government has demonstrated interest in attracting foreign investment to build factories producing end-user petroleum based products such as detergents and tires.

The refinery reports that its products are exported to Russia, China, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Japan.

Turkmenistan has invested \$900 million in a number of projects designed to increase the country's refining capacity by 95 percent by 2030, including a facility for coking (carbonization) and tar de-asphalting with an annual capacity of 900,000 and 500,000 tons, respectively. The government also constructed new facilities to produce bitumen and polypropylene film, as well as an oil refinery with a capacity of 3 billion tons per year. Turkmenistan has also commissioned a feasibility study regarding the construction of a new oil refinery in its Balkan province.

The government contracted the consortium of Hyundai Engineering (Korea), LG International (Korea) and Toyo Engineering (Japan) to construct a new \$3.4 billion gas chemical complex in Kiyanly village of Balkan province. Construction was completed in October 2018. The facility can produce up to 386,000 tons of polyethylene and 81,000 tons of polypropylene annually using 5 bcm of natural gas as feedstock.

The Turkmen Government wants to diversify and create natural gas refining facilities to produce polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride, methanol, formaldehyde, resins, synthetic rubber, and paint materials.

In June 2019 Turkmenistan opened a \$1.7 billion gas-to-gasoline plant at Ovadandepi in Ahal province. The new complex is designed to process 1.785 bcm of natural gas into 600,000 tons of A-92 gasoline per year. A framework agreement for this project was signed between State Concern TurkmenGas and a consortium of companies including Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd (Japan) and Rönesans Türkmen (Turkey) in 2013. In April 2016, the Ministry of Oil & Gas announced that a consortium of South Korean LG International Corp., Hyundai Engineering Co, and Japanese Itochu Corporation will start the construction of another plant to produce synthetic liquid fuels (GTL, gas-to-liquid). The complex is designed to process 3.7 bcm of natural gas into 1,100,000 tons of diesel fuel, as well as more than 400,000 tons of straight-run gasoline (naphtha), per year.

The country has plans to build additional GTL plants in the coming years.

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Various modern oil and gas processing units; gas-to-liquid fuel equipment; oil and oil products storage reservoirs.

### **Opportunities**

Construction of oil and gas processing units; new technologies in gas-to-liquid fuel processing; production and storage of petroleum products

### **Web Resources**

NEBIT-GAZ (<http://www.oilgas.gov.tm/>)



## **Chemical Industry**

### **Overview**

Turkmenistan has nine chemical plants that produce nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers (700,000 tons per year), sulfuric and nitric acids, iodine, bromine, and mineral salts. In 2014, Turkmenistan inaugurated a urea plant with capacity of 640,000 tons per year and an ammonia plant with the capacity of 400,000 tons per year in the south-eastern city of Mary. These plants will together use 500 million cubic meters of natural gas per year as feedstock.

Turkmenistan has plans to increase fertilizer production to approximately 5,000,000 tons per year, of which 1,400,000 tons will be potash fertilizers. In March 2017, Turkmenistan opened a major potash fertilizer plant in Garlyk village of Lebap province, capable of producing 1,400,000 tons of fertilizer per year. According to unofficial reports, the Garlyk plant is currently operating well below its total capacity due technical complications. Turkmenistan also plans to increase iodine production from 500 to 1,515 tons per year by 2030.

In September 2018, a \$1.5 billion carbamide (urea) fertilizer plant opened on the Caspian coast in Garabogaz, Balkan province. The plant, built by Turkey's Gap Insaat and Japan's Mitsubishi Corporation, has the capacity to produce 1.1 million tons of urea annually using about 1 billion cubic meters of natural gas as feedstock. The government also announced plans to set up joint ventures with foreign companies to produce various types of chemicals based on local raw materials. In February 2018, Turkmenistan opened a float glass manufacturing plant in Ovadandep in Ahal province.

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Production of organic polymers such as polyethylene and polypropylene; construction of new industrial facilities for the production and export of products such as caustic soda, chlorine and its derivatives, as well as potassium fertilizers; high grade glass and insulation composite materials of basalt fibers.

### **Opportunities**

Construction of urea and ammonia plants; utilization of sulfur resulting from natural gas production processes, and construction of iodine and bromine plants. Building of new industrial facilities for the production and export of products such as caustic soda, chlorine and its derivatives, and potassium fertilizers.

### **Web Resources**

Ministry of Energy of Turkmenistan (<http://minenergo.gov.tm/>)

## **Transportation**

### **Overview**

Large scale reforms to improve infrastructure in the road, railway, maritime, and air transportation sectors of Turkmenistan are underway. Since 1992, the volume of freight transportation in Turkmenistan has increased in all sectors, particularly by road. Between 2011 and 2015, the government planned to complete upgrades to the Turkmenbashi – Ashgabat – Mary – Turkmenabat – Farap M-37 highway running from the Caspian Sea to the Uzbek border and the P-1 Dashoguz – Ashgabat highway crossing the country from north to south; both projects, however, remain under construction. All construction work on the 564 km Turkmenbashi – Ashgabat highway, which was expected to be the country’s first toll road, was suspended when the Turkish contractor Polimeks walked away from the project, reportedly because of non-payment from the Government of Turkmenistan. The government announced in January 2019 that closed joint stock company “Turkmen Awtoban” will design and construct the 600km long Ashgabat-Turkmenabat highway in three phases: Ashgabat-Tejen by December 2020, Tejen-Mary by December 2022 and Mary-Turkmenabat by December 2023. Road upgrades are needed in many parts of the country, in particular outside of Ashgabat. The Uzen–Gyzylgaya–Bereket–Etrek–Gorgan international railway, also known as the North-South Railway (NSR) or the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran Railway, opened in 2014. The NSR connects the Kazakh and Iranian railway systems through Turkmenistan with a junction at Bereket linking to Turkmenistan’s east-west mainline. The new railway is expected to transport 10 million tons of goods annually. In November 2016, the Turkmen and Afghan presidents opened a single-track rail linking Kerki, Turkmenistan, to Aqina, Afghanistan, and a rail link from Serhetabat, Turkmenistan, to Toraghundi, Afghanistan, in February 2018.

In May 2018, Turkmenistan completed the expansion of the international seaport in Turkmenbashi, on the Caspian Sea shore. The new port includes ferry, passenger, and container terminals, as well as ship repair facilities. These new services are intended to increase cargo traffic in the region. The new port has a total annual capacity of 17 million tons of dry cargo, 300,000 passengers, and 75,000 vehicles.

Turkmenistan Airlines (TurkmenHowaYollary or THY) is the state-owned air carrier, with a passenger fleet of Boeing aircraft. From 2013-2020 Boeing has delivered five new 737-800 passenger planes to Turkmenistan. According to the National Program for the Development of Civil Aviation of Turkmenistan for the period 2012-2030, the number of new aircraft in THY’s commercial fleet will increase from 20 to 39. In recent years, Turkmenistan Airlines briefly added new international flights to Kuala Lumpur and Riga, before cancelling them indefinitely, and announced new flights to Milan and Doha, which never commenced. Luxembourg’s Cargolux transports cargo via Turkmenbashi. The government constructed new airports in the cities of Turkmenbashi, Mary, and Turkmenabat as well as new runways at the Ashgabat and Dashoguz Airports. In 2018, the Government of Turkmenistan announced international tenders for the construction of new airports in Garabogaz and Kerki.

In addition to Turkmenistan Airlines, international carriers such as Turkish Airlines, S7, Belavia, FlyDubai, Cargolux, and China Southern Airlines operate international flights servicing Turkmenistan. The government expressed an interest in joining the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) in 2013 but at present is not an IATA member. Lufthansa suspended its service to Ashgabat indefinitely in October 2019. The Commercial Maritime Code of 2008 regulates commercial navigation, addresses freight transport, transport of passengers and their baggage to a foreign port, emergency operations, and accidents with other ships. In addition, it includes provisions on crew certification, state registration of ships and ship ownership titles, sea traffic control systems, maintenance of seaways, and environmental protection.

Severe disruptions to air travel associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have affected both passenger and cargo flights. Consult the embassy website or individual air carriers for the latest information.

### **Leading Sub-Sectors**

Road, railway and port construction and maintenance consultation services; specialized transportation machinery; and solutions to create logistics centers.

**Opportunities**

Road construction projects; supply of airport navigation equipment; supply of specialized machinery for transporting cement, water, or flour; supply of garbage trucks, street cleaners, cement mixers and dump trucks.

**Web Resources**

<http://www.railway.gov.tm>

<http://www.turkmenmaritime.gov.tm/>

## Customs, Regulations & Standards

### Trade Barriers

Slow and bureaucratic customs procedures seriously inhibit trade. When the basis of a consignment is a contract (and not a paid invoice), Turkmenistan requires that export and import contracts be registered at the State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange (SCRME), the only exchange in the country. The contract registration procedure at SCRME includes a justification of prices. The procedure applies not only to contracts signed at SCRME, but also to contracts signed between third parties. The contract's feasibility is also scrutinized by the Supreme Chamber of Control. All import contracts must be registered before goods are delivered to Turkmenistan. Contract registration is a cumbersome process, involving approval from various agencies and ministries.

Investment projects, including civil construction projects, are required to be registered at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Turkmenistan is a party to the 1995 Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of Other States (ICSID), but it is not a member of the 1958 Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York Convention). The commercial law enforcement system includes the Arbitration Court of Turkmenistan, which tries 13 categories of disputes, both pre-contractual and post-contractual, including taxation, legal foundations, and bankruptcy issues. U.S. companies are urged to include an international arbitration clause in their contracts, as political considerations still influence local courts. Several foreign companies have pursued international arbitration against the Turkmen government through the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes and the Arbitration Institute of the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce. Turkmenistan's restrictive visa regime and taxation policy are also difficult issues for companies to overcome.

### Import Tariffs

Turkmenistan does not officially apply tariffs per se on imported goods. However, in practice the government levies customs duties and higher excise taxes on imports. These duties and taxes are significant barriers to trade. Under Presidential Resolution #9925 dated July 27, 2008, there is a customs duty on the import of 49 types of merchandise. Average rates range from five percent to 100 percent. Importers also must pay small administrative fees to the Customs Service. In 2015, Turkmenistan launched a policy of import substitution and there are reports of rising customs duties. Turkmenistan has introduced new customs fees for a list of imported goods, including vegetables, fruits, juices, and other unannounced products. A presidential resolution may waive all or some customs duties and taxes, including the excise tax.

More information with a list of detailed items subject to excise taxes is available in the Russian and Turkmen languages at the website of the [State Customs Service of Turkmenistan](http://statecustoms.gov.tm):

<https://customs.gov.tm/ru/info/tamozhennye-platezhi/aktsizy>

Turkmenistan applies import excise taxes on the following products:

#### **Beer**

Fifty percent of the cost, but not less than four manat per liter.

#### **Wine**

Wines, spirits, liquor with alcohol content of 20 percent or less: One hundred percent of the cost, but not less than 20 manat per liter.

Wines, spirits, liquor with alcohol content above 20 percent: One hundred percent of the cost, but not less than 30 manat per liter.

## **Spirits**

USD 4 per liter of spirits used in the manufacturing of beverages (exceptions made for spirits destined for medical purposes or imported by state enterprises or consumer cooperative enterprises)

## **Tobacco products**

Thirty seven and a half percent of the customs value, but not less than USD 0.625 per pack.

Other tobacco products and products made of tobacco substitute, USD 10 per kilogram.

Three state agencies are empowered by the President to issue a license for the import and sale of cigarettes: the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry, Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations and the Main State Standards Service (Turkmenstandartlary AKA Turkmen Standards). Regular Turkmen citizens are limited to bringing two packs of cigarettes from abroad.

## **Jewelry**

Gold (excluding gold bullion), up to one kg, is exempted from customs duties; for larger quantities of jewelry 15 percent of the customs value import duty applies.

## **Automobiles**

USD 0.30 for every cubic centimeter of engine displacement plus 5.2 percent of the initial price of the vehicle.

In March 2016, the President imposed new customs fees for importing cars. For example, for a Toyota Corolla (2012 model, 1.8-liter engine) the customs fee is 38,574 manat (\$11,021 at the official exchange rate). Due to these new customs fees, it makes little economic sense to import used cars. An April 2011 presidential decree prohibits the import of vehicles older than five years. In September 2010, the Turkmen Customs Service prohibited the import of damaged cars citing a presidential decree, which has not been made public. The import of sedans and SUVs with engines larger than 3.5 liters is also prohibited. De facto bans prohibit importation of black cars and cars with tinted windows.

## **Import Requirements & Documentation**

The following documents are required for customs clearance of imported goods when the basis of the supply is a contract (and not a paid invoice):

1. A contract registered at SCRME: The contract should be registered before the goods are delivered to Turkmenistan. Contracts are required to include the specifications of the goods, information on their origin, the currency involved, item price, and total price.
2. A bill of lading for maritime transportation or a Cargo Movement Report (CMR) for transportation by truck: Customs officers will check the CMR or bill of lading against the information contained in the contract.
3. A certificate of origin and quality: The certificate of the country of origin should be obtained from Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the place of origin prior to the departure of goods. The importer is required to receive a certificate of conformity from Turkmen Standards (Turkmenstandartlary).
4. A Customs Declaration: Customs declaration and clearance is the responsibility of the party specified in the contract. In most cases, however, the buyer takes on responsibility for the clearance process. During customs clearance, the State Customs Service charges a service fee of 0.2 percent of the contract price. Additional licenses may be required of the buyer, depending on the type of imported product (an alcohol trade license to import alcohol, or a State Radio Frequencies Commission permit to import radio electronics and high frequency devices, for example). Turkmenistan has freelance customs clearance agents who can assist with customs processing.

## Labeling/Marking Requirements

Food items in Turkmenistan must be labeled in Turkmen and/or Russian, although additional labeling in English, Turkish, Persian, and Arabic is not uncommon. Home appliances and electronics are almost exclusively labeled in English. However, Russian-language instructions and operational menus are preferred. The Law on Trademarks of 2008 provides for the legal protection and use of trademarks, which must first be registered at the Patent Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economy. The Patent Department issues a certificate of registration within three months of application, after which the trademark is valid for ten years (from the date of application).

## U.S. Export Controls

The United States imposes export controls to protect national security interests and promote foreign policy objectives related to dual-use goods through implementation of the Export Administration Regulations (EAR). The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is comprised of two elements: Export Administration (EA), which is responsible for processing license applications, counselling exporters, and drafting and publishing changes to the [Export Administration Regulations](#); and Export Enforcement (EE), which is responsible for the enforcement of the EAR. BIS works closely with U.S. embassies, foreign governments, industry, and trade associations to ensure that exports from the United States are secure and comply with the EAR. BIS officials conduct site visits, known as End-Use Checks (EUCs), globally with end-users, consignees, and/or other parties to transactions involving items subject to the EAR to verify compliance.

An EUC is an on-site verification of a non-U.S. party to a transaction to determine whether the party is a reliable recipient of U.S. items. EUCs are conducted as part of BIS's licensing process, as well as its compliance program, to determine if items were exported in accordance with a valid BIS authorization or otherwise consistent with the EAR. Specifically, an EUC verifies the *bona fides* of transactions subject to the EAR, to include: confirming the legitimacy and reliability of the end use and end user; monitoring compliance with license conditions; and ensuring items are used, re-exported or transferred (in-country) in accordance with the EAR. These checks might be completed prior to the export of items pursuant to a BIS export license in the form of a Pre-License Check (PLC), or following an export from the U.S. during a Post-Shipment Verification (PSV).

BIS officials rely on EUCs to safeguard items subject to the EAR from diversion to unauthorized end uses/users. The verification of a foreign party's reliability facilitates future trade, including pursuant to BIS license reviews. If BIS is unable to verify the reliability of the company or is prevented from accomplishing an EUC, the company may receive, for example, more regulatory scrutiny during license application reviews or be designated on BIS's Unverified List or Entity List, as applicable.

BIS has developed a list of "red flags", or warning signs, and compiled "Know Your Customer" guidance intended to aid exporters in identifying possible violations of the EAR. Both of these resources are publicly available, and their dissemination to industry members is highly encouraged to help promote EAR compliance.

BIS also provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one to two-day seminars that focus on the basics of exporting to coverage of more advanced, industry specific topics. Interested parties can check a [list of upcoming seminars and webinars](#) or reference BIS provided [online training](#).

BIS and the EAR regulate transactions involving the export of "dual-use" U.S. goods, services, and technologies. For advice and regulatory requirements, exporters should consult the other U.S. Government agencies which regulate more specialized items. For example, the U.S. Department of State's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls has authority over defense articles and services, or munitions. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the [BIS website](#) or in Supplement No. 3 to Part 730 of the EAR.

The EAR is available on the [BIS website](#) and on the [e-CFR](#) (Electronic Code of Federal Regulations) and is updated as needed.

The [Consolidated Screening List](#) (CSL) is a list of parties for which the United States Government maintains restrictions on certain exports, reexports or transfers of items. The CSL consolidates eleven export screening lists of the Departments of Commerce, State and the Treasury into a single data feed as an aid to industry in conducting electronic screens of parties to regulated transactions. Exporters are encouraged to classify their items prior to export, as well as consult the CSL to determine if any parties to the transaction may be subject to specific license requirements.

### **Temporary Entry**

According to Turkmenistan's Law on Foreign Investment, goods and property that are imported temporarily, including those for subcontracts, can be imported without duties, but only for the duration of the existing contract. Presidential Resolution #5121 (2001), stipulates that customs duties are payable on temporarily imported goods, but are reimbursable if they are exported within one year. The one-year requirement may be extended. Goods cannot be imported under consignment contracts.

### **Prohibited & Restricted Imports**

Presidential resolution # 1987 (1994) outlines two separate sets of goods which must be licensed for import/export by the President and the Cabinet of Ministers. Import or export of the following goods requires presidential approval:

1. Arms and military equipment and special items used for military production and military services;
2. Gunpowder, explosive substances, explosive and pyrotechnic devices;
3. Radioactive materials, technology, equipment and installations, special non-nuclear materials and radioactive waste;
4. Precious metals and alloys, ores, scrap material and industrial waste (for export only);
5. Precious stones and items including industrial waste, powder, recuperation of precious stones, pearls and amber;
6. Narcotics and psychotropic substances;
7. Special raw materials, equipment, technology and scientific information used for arms and military equipment production;
8. Dual-use materials, equipment, and technology that may be used for production of nuclear, chemical, and other weapons of mass destruction;
9. Export of scientific research, technology and inventions; and
10. Poisons (except those included in the list below).

### **The Cabinet of Ministers tightly controls licenses to export or import the following goods:**

1. Chemicals;
2. Poisons;
3. Industrial waste;
4. Turkmen national jewelry;
5. Culturally valuable goods;
6. Antique printed products and manuscripts;
7. Archaeological artifacts;
8. Numismatics;
9. Art pieces;
10. Collections of materials on mineralogy and biology;
11. Central Asian sheep-dogs (Alabay);
12. Ahal Teke horses;

13. Pedigree cattle;
14. Wild animals;
15. Wild plants, bones of fossil animals, ivory, horns, hoofs, corals and other such materials;
16. Information about energy resources and minerals of regions and fields located in Turkmenistan and within the continental shelf, offshore zones;
17. Export of documents related to accounting, human resources and other internal details of private businesses registered in Turkmenistan;
18. Import of any religious literature without permission of the State Commission on Religious Organizations and Expert Evaluation of Religious Information Resources (SCROEERIR), including the Bible and Koran; and,
19. Import of cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and swine requires a permit from the Cabinet of Ministers.

## **Customs Regulations**

Customs regulations consist of the Customs Code of Turkmenistan, Tax Code of Turkmenistan (on excises) and a number of by-laws and presidential resolutions:

# 9925 of July 27, 2008 (import and export customs duties).

Contact info:

138, Archabil shayoly, Ashgabat

Phone: (+993-12) 39 41 55

E-mail: [customs@online.tm](mailto:customs@online.tm).

## **Standards for Trade**

Turkmenistan has made small steps to transition to international trade standards. “Turkmenstandartlary” is the main state standards service that regulates and oversees the entire processes of conformity assessment, product certification, and publication of technical regulations. Products made in Turkmenistan are labelled with a barcode that starts with number 483.

### **Overview**

Turkmenistan uses National Standards of Turkmenistan (TDS) and General Interstate Standards (GOST). GOST standards are developed and maintained by the Euro-Asian Council for Standardization, Metrology, and Certification (EASC), composed of 12 former Soviet countries and incorporating former Soviet standards. Standards and metrology are governed by the Law on Standardization and Metrology of 1993 as well as a series of by-laws.

### **Standards**

Turkmenstandartlary is the regulatory agency for standards and metrology in Turkmenistan. There are no other standards organizations. Turkmenistan became a correspondent member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 1993. In 2015, Turkmenistan created a national organization for bar coding. In May 2015, global standards organization GS1 issued a country prefix of 483 for products made in Turkmenistan.

### **Testing, Inspection and Certification**

All imported goods must be certified as adhering to quality standards set by Turkmenstandartlary. Bilateral agreements on the acceptance of national state certificates allow for mutually simplified procedures on issuing conformance certificates for imported/exported goods. The United States and Turkmenistan do not have an intergovernmental agreement on standards, metrology, and certification.

Turkmen legislation requires that products be certified. Gauging equipment also needs to be calibrated by Turkmenstandartlary. In 1998, Turkmenistan introduced a sanitary certification requirement for food products



imported into Turkmenistan. The State Sanitary and Epidemiological Inspectorate (SSEI) conducts tests of imported food products to issue certificates of conformity. For food products, certificates of conformity must be accompanied by a Russian-language product description. In March 2019, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Turkmenistan (UIE) officially opened the first private sector food safety laboratory in Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan joined the International Standard Association in 1991, and in 1992 began to adhere to the Interstate Council on Standards, Metrology, and Certification that covers CIS countries.

### **Publication of Technical Regulations**

Turkmenstandartlary publishes national standards updates.

Contact Information:

Main State Standards Service “Turkmenstandartlary”  
12 Galkynysh Ashgabat,  
Turkmenistan, 744004  
Tel: (993-12) 49-58-59  
Fax: (993-12) 51-04-48

<https://turkmenstandartlary.gov.tm/>

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to notify to the WTO proposed technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures that could affect trade. Notify U.S. ([www.nist.gov/notifyus](http://www.nist.gov/notifyus)) is a free, web-based e-mail registration service that captures and makes available for review and comment key information on draft regulations and conformity assessment procedures. Users receive customized e-mail alerts when new notifications are added by selected country or countries and industry sector(s) of interest and can also request full texts of regulations. This service and its associated web site are managed and operated by the USA WTO TBT Inquiry Point housed within the National Institute of Standards and Technology, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

### **Trade Agreements**

Turkmenistan signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the United States, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in 2004. The TIFA established a regional forum to discuss ways to improve investment climates and expand trade within Central Asia. There is no Central Asia Free Trade Agreement at this time.

### **Licensing Requirements for Professional Services**

The Law on Licensing Certain Types of Activities lists the kinds of businesses that are subject to licensing and governs the licensing process. The law lists 44 activities. There is no comprehensive licensing agency; licenses should be obtained from the relevant authorized government agencies. Licenses are generally not issued for less than three years.

## **Selling U.S. Products & Services**

### **Distribution & Sales Channels**

Despite the country's central geographic location, reliable transportation routes through Turkmenistan are limited. One of the main entry points is the port of Turkmenbashi on the Caspian Sea, located 270 kilometers (170 miles) east of and across the Caspian from Baku, Azerbaijan. Turkmenbashi is an important gateway to Central Asia and is an import and export transit point for a variety of products. A renovated and expanded port opened in May 2018 and has a total annual capacity of 17 million tons of dry cargo, 300,000 passengers, and 75,000 vehicles.

Turkmenistan has a number of rail links with Uzbekistan in the north and east, with rail and road crossings in the Farap district near Turkmenabat the most heavily used. In March 2017, the president opened new railway and highway bridges between the cities of Turkmenabat and Farap. The bridges are expected to improve transportation between eastern Turkmenistan and the Uzbek border. There is limited capability for crossboundary deliveries by trucks with Kazakhstan via Garabogaz in the northwest; the road is in very poor condition. The North-South Railway connecting Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan was opened in December 2014. It has an anticipated transportation capacity of 10 million tons of goods annually. In November 2016, a rail line linking Kerki, Turkmenistan to Aqina, Afghanistan was opened. In February 2018, a rail link from Serhetabat, Turkmenistan to Toraghundi, Afghanistan was opened, and expansion of this line is currently underway. The bulk of air cargo enters the country via the Ashgabat airport, although there are airports in all provincial centers. Airports in Ashgabat, Mary, Turkmenbashi and Turkmenabat can handle heavy aircraft. Most cargo transportation within the country is by truck. Mary, Turkmenbashi, Balkanabat, and to a lesser extent Ashgabat, are the main destinations for heavy industrial equipment and supplies, while Ashgabat is the major destination for most consumer products.

Severe disruptions to air travel associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have affected both passenger and cargo flights. Consult the embassy website or individual air carriers for the latest **information**.

### **Using an Agent to Sell U.S. Products and Services**

The procurement of equipment, spare parts, and consumables for Turkmenistan's major industries, such as oil and gas, power generation, railway, air transportation, and telecommunications, is state controlled. However, the government does not have a centralized procurement and distribution agency. Individual ministries and state entities procure their needs via a tender process. Announcements in Russian and Turkmen are made in the local press and on some websites. Tenders offered by agencies in the state-controlled oil and gas sector can be found here:

<http://www.oilgas.gov.tm/en/>

Producers of heavy equipment usually sell their goods in Turkmenistan by establishing a local office or through a locally established distributor. Most local distributors provide some repair and maintenance services. Pharmaceuticals, food items, and consumer goods are sold mostly through quasi-private and public channels; distributorships are numerous and are often foreign based. Finding a reliable distributor is challenging because of a lack of accessible information on private companies. The Economic-Commercial section of the [U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat](#) can help identify potential partners for U.S. firms.

### **Establishing an Office**

The laws regulating the establishment of a local office are the Law on Enterprises, the Civil Code, and the Law on Corporations (joint stock companies). A foreign investor may establish a:

- Representative office,
- Branch,
- Individual enterprise with 100 percent foreign capital, or a
- Joint venture (JV).

A representative office is defined as a separate division of a legal entity, located at a different location from the registered address of the legal entity, which protects and represents the legal entity's interests, and/or concludes contracts and conducts other legal acts on the legal entity's behalf.

A branch is defined as a separate division of a legal entity, located at a different location from the registered address of the legal entity, that undertakes all or a part of the functions of the legal entity, including representation functions.

Representative offices and branches are not legal entities. They operate within regulations set by the legal entities that formed them.

#### **Requirements for Establishing a Representative Office:**

1. An application to establish a representative office signed by an authorized company official. Includes intended line(s) of business in Turkmenistan and information on the investor with an overview of the investor's activities;
2. A decision to establish a representative office signed by an authorized company official;
3. Two notarized copies of the charter of the representative office, in Turkmen and Russian, signed by a company official;
4. A personal information form for the head of the representative office in Turkmenistan with a 3x4 cm photo and copy of the representative office head's biographical page of passport;
5. A duly certified power of attorney for the head of the representative office in Turkmenistan;
6. A notarized copy of the foreign investor's charter notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat;
7. An original transcript of the foreign investor's official registration, issued by the foreign investor's national registration agency. The transcript should be notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
8. An original foreign investor's financial status report (bank statement). The bank statement should be notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
9. Written confirmation from a Turkmenistan governmental authority confirming the legal address;
10. Receipt for payment of the registration fee.

#### **Requirements for Establishing a Branch:**

1. An application to establish a branch signed by an authorized company official. Includes intended line(s) of business in Turkmenistan and information on the investor and an overview of the investor's activities;
2. A decision to establish a branch signed by an authorized company official;
3. Two copies of the charter of the branch, in Turkmen and Russian, signed by an authorized company official;
4. A personal information form for the head of the branch in Turkmenistan with a 3x4 cm photo and a copy of the branch head's passport biographical page;
5. Duly certified power of attorney for the head of the branch in Turkmenistan;
6. A notarized copy of the foreign investor's charter notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
7. An original transcript of the foreign investor's official registration, issued by the foreign investor's national registration agency. The transcript should be notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
8. An original foreign investor's financial status report (bank statement); The bank statement should be notarized by a Consulate of Turkmenistan overseas or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
9. Written confirmation from a Turkmenistan governmental authority confirming the legal address;
10. Receipt for payment of the registration fee.

### **Requirements for Establishing a Joint Venture:**

1. An application to establish a joint venture signed by authorized company officials. Includes intended line(s) of business in Turkmenistan and information on the investor with an overview of its activities;
2. A protocol to establish a joint venture signed by authorized company officials;
3. Articles of incorporation and two copies of the charter, in Turkmen and Russian, signed by authorized company officials;
4. An economic feasibility assessment (investment project) of the joint venture signed by authorized company officials;
5. A personal information form for the head of the joint venture in Turkmenistan with a 3x4 cm photo and copy of the joint venture head's passport biographical page;
6. A notarized copy of the foreign investor's charter notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
7. An original transcript of the foreign investor's official registration, issued by the foreign investor's national registration agency. The transcript should be notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
8. An original foreign investor's financial status report (bank statement) notarized by a Consulate or Embassy of Turkmenistan overseas, or by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan;
9. Written confirmation from a provincial government or the Ashgabat Municipality of a legal address in Turkmenistan;
10. A document confirming payment of 50 percent of the charter capital of the joint venture;
11. Receipt for payment of the registration fee.

Turkmenistan joint venture participants also must submit:

1. A copy of the charter, Certificate of State Registration, and transcript from the Unified State Register of Legal Entities;
2. For state enterprises: a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan;
3. For persons physically residing in Turkmenistan: a personal information form with a 3x4 cm photo and copy of the passport biographical page.

For all types of offices, documents should be submitted as originals in the language of the investor's country with appropriate official stamps (faxed copies are not accepted), with Turkmen and Russian translations. Translations should be certified by the entity that translated the documents. Representative offices and branches are registered for two years, with the right to extend registration. Registration at Turkmenistan's Main State Tax Service and the Local Statistics Office may also be required. A foreign company seeking to establish an office in Ashgabat may rent space in business centers, hotels, or in a building that belongs to a state organization or state/private enterprise. After a company has chosen office space, it must apply for approval of its legal address with the appropriate local government office.

### **Franchising**

Turkmenistan's small population, underdeveloped private sector, and severe limitations on currency conversion hinder franchising attempts. Only three U.S. franchises – Pepsi, Coca-Cola, and Levi's -- currently operate in Turkmenistan. Coca-Cola suspended operations in early 2019, largely due to limitations on currency conversion, but resumed partial operations in mid-2020.

### **Direct Marketing**

Elements of direct marketing exist, but this approach is not common.

## **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

Joint ventures can be established in the form of a corporation (also referred to in Turkmenistan as a “joint-stock company”) or as a partnership (also known as a “business society”). Article 29 of the Law on Enterprises defines business societies as “associations of two or more individuals and/or individuals [established] to conduct joint activities.” Article 1 of the Law on Corporations classifies corporations as companies, in which capital contributions by physical and/or legal entities are combined as charter capital, which is divided into a certain number of shares certifying the contractual rights of shareholders of the corporation. Corporations can be close-ended (private) or open-ended (public). Registration and activities of corporations are regulated by the Law on Corporations, the Law on Foreign Investment in Turkmenistan, and the Law on Investment Activity in Turkmenistan.

The Law on Enterprises and the Law on Corporations provide for mergers and acquisitions. However, Turkmenistan’s relevant legislation does not clearly define activities involving foreign parties, nor does it have specific provisions for disposition of interests in business enterprises, both local and those involving foreign participation. Government approval is necessary for acquisitions and mergers of certain enterprises, specifically those with state shares. The Law on Licensing Certain Types of Activities lists the kinds of businesses that are subject to licensing and governs the licensing process. The law lists 44 activities. There is no comprehensive licensing agency; licenses should be obtained from the relevant authorized government agencies and are generally not issued for less than three years. Oil and gas production and exploration licenses are issued by Turkmen Oil State Concern and TurkmenGas State Concern respectively for a duration of 20-25 years. Below is the list of the main business activities subject to licensing:

1. Oil and gas exploration and production
2. Oil and gas processing
3. Design, construction, maintenance, and operation of trunk pipelines and power transmission lines
4. Production, transmission, and distribution of electricity
5. Design and construction of buildings and facilities
6. Production of construction materials
7. Transportation and freight forwarding services
8. Banking
9. Insurance
10. Auditing
11. Legal counsel or services
12. Quality and product certification
13. Healthcare services and production, including pharmaceutical sales
14. Import, production, and sale of alcohol and tobacco
15. Telecommunications
16. Tourism
17. Trade

## **Express Delivery**

The Express Mailing Service (EMS) of the state-owned Turkmenpochta (Turkmen Postal Service) was the only express delivery service in the country until July 2018, when a private company, Beyik Yupek Yoly, became an authorized service contractor for DHL.

## **Due Diligence**

Due diligence is extremely difficult to carry out. Turkmenistan does not have company disclosure requirements and companies in most cases do not publish their annual financial statements. The government does not publish lists of individuals or companies that are known to have violated tax, environmental, or other laws. [Business Turkmenistan](#) is the business news and information service accredited to operate in Turkmenistan. Hiring a local professional may

help with collecting some data and anecdotal information on the ground. Consulting other outlets, like the Economist Intelligence Unit, may also be helpful.

## **E-Commerce**

Electronic commerce is rudimentary and the country does not have specific laws or regulations to govern the e-commerce sector. Chinese websites are the top destination for Turkmen citizens shopping online. Electronics and clothing constitute the major types of goods purchased online from abroad. Most customers access internet shopping websites from mobile phones, often with slow internet speeds. There are no major consumer buying holidays or shopping days for e-commerce in Turkmenistan, except for those announced on Chinese internet websites like [aliexpress.com](https://www.aliexpress.com). The major internet websites for commercial advertising in Turkmenistan include [VESTNIKTМ](https://www.vestniktm.com/) (<https://www.vestniktm.com/>), [TMAWTO](https://www.tmawto.com/tm/) (<https://www.tmawto.com/tm/>), [EMLAK](http://www.emlak.tm/) (<http://www.emlak.tm/>), and [Satlyk](https://satlyk.org/) (<https://satlyk.org/>), although no online payment options are available. Currency convertibility is a major limitation to e-commerce or any other type of foreign transaction in Turkmenistan.

## **Selling Factors & Techniques**

Food items for distribution in Turkmenistan need to be labeled in Turkmen and/or Russian, although additional Turkish, Farsi, and Arabic labeling is not uncommon. Home appliances and electronics are labeled in English, Russian and German.

## **Trade Promotion & Advertising**

Printed ads and commercials are used on a limited basis; radio advertisements are uncommon. Most advertising is visual (billboards, posters, stickers, and various memorabilia). Entities not registered in Turkmenistan are not allowed to place ads in the press or to air commercials on TV. The most commonly used language for advertising is Turkmen. There are no Russian-language radio stations in Turkmenistan.

## **Pricing**

Turkmenistan's Value Added Tax (VAT) is 15 percent. A customs duty is levied on approximately 100 different types of imported merchandise. Prices are usually fixed and controlled by the government.

## **Sales Service/Customer Support**

After-sales service and customer protection are becoming increasingly important for home appliances, electronics, furniture, and automobiles. Customers, especially in Ashgabat, expect delivery, installation, and warranties for many such products. However, a "no-refund" policy still dominates the market for items like clothing.

## **Local Professional Services**

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or the quality of services provided by the following persons or firms. The firms are divided into two categories: state and private. Names in the categories are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no significance. Prospective clients need to request professional credentials and areas of expertise directly from the attorneys.

### **State Organizations:**

**Berkararlyk District State Legal Office** - 13, Turkmenbashy Street, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Tel: (993-12) 94-61-63,. Lawyers providing all types of services; however, they do not speak English.

**Bagtyyarlyk District State Legal Office** - 3, Bitarap Turkmenistan Shayoly, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, Tel: (993-12) 24-31-94,. Lawyers providing all types of services; however, they do not speak English.

**Buzmeyin District State Legal Office** - 3, Kesarkach Street, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 744000 Tel: (993-12) 33-01-31. Lawyers providing all types of services; however, they do not speak English.

**Kopetdag District State Legal Office** - 36A, Oguzhan Street, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 744000 Tel: (993-12) 95-72-30. Lawyers providing all types of services; however, they do not speak English.

**Private Firms:**

**Altyn Kanun Counsel Legal Company**

provides services such as consulting, analysis of legal documents, implementation of business projects (Russian and English), and legal support in company registration. Contact info:

10 yyl Abadanchylyk str. 60, "Paytagt" Trade center, 3rd floor, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744000

Tel: (993-12) 47-76-68, fax: (993-12) 47-76-69.

E-mail: [info@turkmens-law.com](mailto:info@turkmens-law.com), [kerim.akmamedov@turkmens-law.com](mailto:kerim.akmamedov@turkmens-law.com), [myahri.babayeva@turkmens-law.com](mailto:myahri.babayeva@turkmens-law.com).

**Ashgabat Consulting Team (ACT)**

provides information on doing business in Turkmenistan, registering foreign companies and investment projects, and arranging necessary licenses. ACT also provides market research, economic consultations, logistical procurement services, and business tour services. English-speaking lawyers provide translations and notarization of documents. Contact info:

Turkmenbashi shayoly 81, 15<sup>th</sup> floor, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744000

Tel: (993-12) 22-76-16

E-mail: [contact@act.tm](mailto:contact@act.tm).

**Baker Tilly**

Provides services such as risk management, forecasting, development of business transparency, auditing, outsourcing and tax advisory. Contact info:

Turkmenbashi shayoly 81, 15<sup>th</sup> floor, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744000

Tel: (993-12) 22-76-06

E-mail: [contact@bakertilly.tm](mailto:contact@bakertilly.tm).

**Konsul**

Provides services such as preparation and analysis of contracts, legal auditing, and preparation of legal documents.

Contact info: Mir 3/1 street, h.8 block "G", Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744000

Tel/fax: (993-12) 45-17-22.

E-mail: [consulturkmenistan@gmail.com](mailto:consulturkmenistan@gmail.com), [consulturkmenistan2@gmail.com](mailto:consulturkmenistan2@gmail.com).

**Medet Ltd.**

Provides all kinds of legal services to companies engaged in investment and commercial activities in Turkmenistan.

Contact info: Bitarap Turkmenistan Street # 19, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 744000

Tel: (993-12) 94-64-00

E-mail: [medet@cat.glasnet.ru](mailto:medet@cat.glasnet.ru).

## **SNR Denton**

An international law firm affiliated with local Turkmen law firm AK Counsel that provides comprehensive commercial legal services for companies investing in Turkmenistan. U.S.-trained attorneys from SNR Denton work in collaboration with AK Counsel's Turkmen lawyers.

Contact info: Marla Valdez, Managing Partner for Central Asia; 38 Dostyk Avenue, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 050010.

Tel: +7 727 258-1950; Fax: +7 727 258-1905

E-mail: [marla.valdez@snrdenton.com](mailto:marla.valdez@snrdenton.com).

## **Principal Business Associations**

Turkmenistan's Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (UIE) is the only association of businesses in Turkmenistan. Local companies are generally required to join. In March 2020 the UIE released new membership provisions for Turkmen companies with minority foreign ownership. There are no provisions in place for 100 percent foreign-owned firms to become members and there are no formal foreign business associations in the country. The Washington-based U.S.-Turkmenistan Business Council (USTBC) is a non-profit organization that promotes commercial relations between the United States and Turkmenistan. There is no American Chamber of Commerce.

## **Web Resources**

- [Turkmenistan International Magazine \(http://turkmenistaninfo.ru/\)](http://turkmenistaninfo.ru/)
- [NEBIT-GAZ \(https://oilgas.gov.tm/en/\)](https://oilgas.gov.tm/en/)
- [Turkmen Business \(http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/\)](http://www.turkmenbusiness.org/)
- [Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan \(http://www.cci.gov.tm/index.php/ru/\)](http://www.cci.gov.tm/index.php/ru/)

## **Trade Financing**

### **Methods of Payment**

Bank transfers and Letters of Credit are the most common methods of payment. For more information about the methods of payment or other trade finance options, please read the Trade Finance Guide available at <https://www.trade.gov/trade-finance-guide-quick-reference-us-exporters>

### **Banking Systems**

The largest state banks include: the State Bank for Foreign Economic Relations (Vnesheconombank), Dayhanbank, Turkmenbashi Bank, Turkmenistan Bank, and Halk Bank. These banks have narrow specializations—foreign trade, agriculture, industry, social infrastructure, and savings and mortgages, respectively. Senagat Bank took over Garagum Bank in 2017 and now is the sole remaining local bank providing general banking services for businesses. In September 2011, the government established the State Development Bank to provide loans to state-owned and private enterprises implementing projects that increase production and create jobs. The government also established Rysgal Bank in 2011 to provide general banking services to the members of the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

There are also five foreign commercial banks in the country: a joint Turkmen-Turkish bank (with Ziraat Bank), a branch of the National Bank of Pakistan, German Deutsche Bank and Commerz Bank, and a branch of Saderat Bank of Iran. The two German banks provide European bank guarantees for companies and for the Turkmen government; they do not provide general banking services. Companies increasingly report dealing with vendors only in cash as vendors have difficulties accessing their money in bank accounts. More detailed information on the payment system of Turkmenistan is available in English at the website of the [Central Bank of Turkmenistan \(https://www.cbt.tm/en/\)](https://www.cbt.tm/en/).



## **Foreign Exchange Controls**

Turkmenistan redenominated its national currency – the manat – and reduced the face value of bills by a factor of 5,000 at the beginning of 2009. The exchange rate was fixed at 2.85 Turkmen manat per 1 USD until January 1, 2015, when it was devalued to 3.5 manat per 1 USD.

The government strictly controls foreign exchange flows and limits on currency conversion make it difficult to repatriate profits or make payments to foreign suppliers. In 2019, the black market rate was relatively steady at around 18 manat/dollar, roughly 5 times the official rate. The COVID-19 pandemic put additional pressure on Turkmenistan’s hard currency reserves and caused the black market rate to spike as high as 25 manat/dollar in the first part of 2020.

## **US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks**

There are no U.S. banks in Turkmenistan.

## **Protecting Intellectual Property**

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective protection of their intellectual property. For additional information, visit [Stopfakes.gov website](http://Stopfakes.gov) or [contact ITA’s Office of Intellectual Property Rights Director, Stevan Mitchell at Stevan.Mitchell@trade.gov](mailto:Stevan.Mitchell@trade.gov).

### **IP Attaché Contact**

Regional IP Specialist

American Embassy Moscow

8 Bolshoi Devyatinskiy Pereulok

Moscow, Russia 121011

Office Phone: +7 495-728-5438

## **Selling to the Public Sector**

### **Selling to the Government**

Many governments finance public works projects with loans from multilateral development banks. Please refer to the “Project Financing” Section in “Trade and Project Financing” for more information.

Turkmenistan’s economy is dominated by state-owned entities. In 2002, the country introduced unified tender rules for all public entities. The rules apply to procurement of goods and services, including construction projects. The tender rules permit closed tenders. In 2014, Turkmenistan adopted the Law on Tenders, which seeks to develop competition among bidders, ensure transparency and effective implementation of tender procedures, and compliance with international standards. Turkmenistan does not have a centralized procurement body, and individual government agencies and state-owned companies conduct their own tenders. Comparable goods are often purchased at different prices by different organizations. Tender processes are not transparent, and falsification of bids and cancellation of tender results can and do occur. Companies with a strong market presence or a good relationship with the government have a higher chance of being selected. Tender winners receive bid approval by the State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange. Most open tenders are announced only in local outlets. In the oil and gas sector tenders are typically announced online at: <http://www.oilgas.gov.tm/en/>. Turkmenistan’s National Program for Socio-Economic

Development for the period 2011-2030 and its Oil and Gas Industry Development Program provide a general idea of Turkmenistan's strategic development plans for specific industries.

U.S. companies bidding on Government tenders may also qualify for U.S. Government advocacy. A unit of the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, the Advocacy Center coordinates U.S. Government interagency advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters bidding on public sector contracts with international governments and government agencies. The Advocacy Center works closely with our network of the U.S. Commercial Service worldwide and inter-agency partners to ensure that exporters of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance of winning government contracts. Advocacy assistance can take many forms but often involves the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government agencies expressing support for the U.S. bidders directly to the foreign government. Consult [Advocacy Center](#) for information on Foreign Government Contracts

## **Financing of Projects**

### **Multilateral Development Banks and Financing Government Sales**

Price, payment terms, and financing can be a significant factor in winning a government contract. Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB). A helpful guide for working with the MDBs is the [Guide to Doing Business with the Multilateral Development Banks](#). The U.S. Department of Commerce's (USDOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) has a Foreign Commercial Service Officer stationed at each of the five different Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Inter-American Development Bank; and the World Bank.

Learn more by contacting the:

- [Advocacy Liaison for European Bank for Reconstruction and Development](#)
- [Advocacy Liaison for World Bank](#)
- [Advocacy Liaison for Asian Development](#)

### **Other Financing Web Resources**

- Export-Import Bank of the United States (<https://www.exim.gov/>)
- Country Limitation Schedule: <https://www.exim.gov/tools-for-exporters/country-limitation-schedule>
- Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) (<https://www.opic.gov/>)
- U.S. Trade and Development Agency ([www.ustda.gov](http://www.ustda.gov))
- SBA's Office of International Trade (<https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/oit>)
- [USDA Commodity Credit Corporation \(www.fsa.usda.gov\)](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)
- U.S. Agency for International Development ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov))
- Asian Development Bank in Turkmenistan (<https://www.adb.org/countries/turkmenistan/main>)
- [European Bank for Reconstruction and Development \(EBRD\) in Turkmenistan](https://www.ebrd.com/turkmenistan.html)  
(<https://www.ebrd.com/turkmenistan.html>)
- [World Bank in Turkmenistan](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkmenistan) (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkmenistan>)

## **Business Travel**

### **Business Customs**

Doing business in Turkmenistan requires patience, persistence, and personal contacts.

The government verbally encourages foreign investment and business, but the current investment climate does not conform to international business norms. No commercial code has been adopted except for the Law on Trade Activity in March 2016. Most local officials are unfamiliar with Western business practices and internationally accepted norms. Few senior members of the government have been educated abroad. Business is often a matter of personal influence and politics. Many marketing methods employed in the West do not work well in Turkmenistan. Successful companies in Turkmenistan have established personal relationships with government officials through either representative offices or regular visits. Smaller or lesser known companies must establish their *bona fides* before being accepted at the highest levels.

Large-scale contracts are signed at the presidential level and usually require travel to Ashgabat by the company's president or CEO to close a deal. Follow-up visits are also critical. The internet is filtered and communications with headquarters can be challenging. There are locally-based distributors representing U.S. companies, but most distributors are foreign companies themselves (usually Turkish), with established offices in Ashgabat. Franchising is not popular. Almost all foreign companies investing in Turkmenistan form joint ventures. Since there is limited privatization, joint ventures generally include government partners. There is no standard form for a joint venture agreement; each agreement is negotiated individually and must be approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and then finalized by presidential decree.

### **Travel Advisory**

The State Department travel alert is routinely updated to remind U.S. citizens of ongoing safety and security concerns and the potential for terrorist acts in Central Asia. U.S. citizens are reminded to maintain a high level of vigilance and to take appropriate steps to increase their security awareness. The most recent relevant travel warning for Turkmenistan can be found on the [Department of State website \(https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html\)](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html).

Elements and supporters of extremist groups are present in Central Asia, including the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), al-Qaida, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement. Previous terrorist attacks conducted in Central Asia involved improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers and have targeted public areas, such as markets and local government facilities. U.S. Embassy personnel in Central Asia continue to observe heightened security precautions at work, as well as in public places, such as markets and bazaars. Terrorists do not distinguish between official and civilian targets. As security is increased at official U.S. facilities, terrorists and their sympathizer often seek softer targets. These targets may include facilities where Americans and other foreigners congregate and visit, such as residential areas, clubs, restaurants, places of worship, hotels, schools, outdoor recreation events, resorts, beaches, maritime facilities, airports, and aircraft. U.S. citizens in Central Asia are urged to register and update their contact information at the nearest U.S. Embassy or through the [Department of State's STEP service](#).

For the latest security information, U.S. citizens traveling abroad should regularly monitor the [Department's Internet website](https://travel.state.gov) (travel.state.gov) where the current Travel Warnings and Public Announcements, including the Public Announcement for Central Asia and the Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, can be found. Up-to-date information on safety and security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S. and Canada, or for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). The Department of State urges U.S. citizens to take responsibility for their own personal security while traveling overseas.

## Visa Requirements

American citizens must have a valid passport and visa and/or letter of invitation from the Turkmenistan government to enter and exit Turkmenistan. The passport must have one completely blank page. To apply for a visa, all U.S. citizens must complete an application and have a letter of invitation approved by the State Migration Service (SMS) in Ashgabat. An individual in Turkmenistan must submit the letter of invitation on behalf of a U.S. citizen to the SMS, accompanied by a copy of the traveler's passport ID page. Each traveler's passport must be valid for at least six months following the date of the application. The SMS requires at least 15 working days for approval. The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat does not issue letters of invitation to citizens interested in private travel to Turkmenistan. The U.S. Embassy facilitates business travel to Turkmenistan by applying for a letter of invitation on behalf of employees of U.S. companies.

Under Turkmenistan law, a traveler with a stamped and approved invitation letter may also obtain a visa at the Ashgabat International Airport upon arrival in Turkmenistan; however, some travelers have reported difficulties with airlines not boarding passengers who only have approved invitation letters in lieu of a visa for onward travel to Turkmenistan. Travelers are strongly urged to obtain a visa before traveling.

The price for a visa will vary according to the intended length of stay. For an additional charge, the SMS can extend a visa in Ashgabat beyond its initial validity. Any traveler arriving without a visa or without the documents necessary to obtain a visa will be denied entry and may be held at the airport or border until the traveler has secured transportation out of Turkmenistan. The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat is unable to intervene with Turkmen authorities regarding the admission of private travelers to Turkmenistan. Travelers departing Turkmenistan must have a current valid visa or they will be denied exit until they have extended the validity of the visa through their departure date.

In addition, U.S. citizens traveling in Turkmenistan should be aware that they need special permission from the SMS to travel to areas of the country that have been restricted by the government, including nearly all border areas.

Upon arrival at an airport or border entry point with a valid letter of invitation, the bearers of official passports will be charged USD 19 to cover the government's actual expenses in issuing the visa. Bearers of regular/tourist passports will be charged USD 99 for a ten-day visa. The visa fees for regular/tourist passport holders may vary depending on the length of stay in the country. Those seeking a 20-day visa, for example, will be charged USD 109. In addition to the immigration requirements mentioned above, foreigners are subject to local registration requirements. Americans who plan to stay more than three working days in Turkmenistan must register and deregister with the SMS. SMS offices are located in all of Turkmenistan's five major cities: Ashgabat, Dashoguz, Mary, Turkmenabat and Turkmenbashi.

One day prior to departure from Turkmenistan, foreigners must return to an SMS office to register their departure. Foreigners should be registered and deregistered at the SMS office in the city in which their sponsoring organization is located. Foreigners who fail to register their departure may be prevented by immigration authorities from leaving the country until they have done so. The penalties for remaining in Turkmenistan with an expired visa or for failing to register with the SMS include fines, arrest, and/or deportation. Foreigners who are deported for these violations may be prohibited from returning to Turkmenistan for up to five years.

American citizens in Turkmenistan are strongly urged to ensure that their visas do not expire and that they register with the SMS upon arrival and deregister upon departure. Visitors holding tourist visas organized by a travel agency must stay in hotels; other visitors may stay in private accommodations whose owner must register the visitor's presence. Visit the [Embassy of Turkmenistan in Washington, DC website](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Turkmenistan.html) for the most current visa information, as well as the State Department international travel information site:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Turkmenistan.html>

U.S. companies that require travel of Turkmenistani nationals to the United States are advised to have those individuals apply for a visa at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat. The process for visa applicants can be found on the Embassy's website:

U.S. Embassy Ashgabat (<https://tm.usembassy.gov/>)

Turkmen Citizenship Law generally prohibits dual citizenship for its citizens. If travelers have dual U.S.–Turkmen citizenship, they may be denied exit from Turkmenistan until they renounce their Turkmen citizenship, a process that can take between six months and a year to complete. If you are a dual U.S.–Turkmen citizen wishing to travel to Turkmenistan, please contact the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat prior to your arrival in Turkmenistan.

[State Department Visa Website](http://travel.state.gov/visa/) (<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>)

[U.S. Embassy Ashgabat](https://tm.usembassy.gov/) (<https://tm.usembassy.gov/>)

[State Migration Service of Turkmenistan](http://migration.gov.tm/ru/) (<http://migration.gov.tm/ru/>)

### **Currency**

Turkmenistan's local currency is the manat, which is the only legal means of payment in Turkmenistan. The government has introduced higher fines for illegal foreign exchange transactions (i.e., selling and purchasing foreign currency via informal channels) and requires that most transactions be in local currency. Although credit cards are not widely accepted, some hotels in Ashgabat accept Visa credit and debit cards; travelers checks are not accepted.

### **Telecommunications/Electronics**

Cellular phone service exists throughout Turkmenistan, but its quality and reliability are substandard. State-run Turkmen telecom is the only mobile provider in the country. Internet access in hotels is often slow or not available, and it can be difficult to arrange an internet connection for a private home or office. The government restricts access to some websites and filters online usage.

### **Transportation**

Several regional carriers, such as S7 and FlyDubai have service to Ashgabat. Turkish Airlines is the only major non-regional carrier that flies to Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan Airlines has flights to Abu Dhabi, Almaty, Ankara, Bangkok, Beijing, Dubai, Istanbul, Kazan, Minsk, Moscow, New Delhi, Saint Petersburg, and Yerevan. Russian S7 Airlines flies between Moscow and Ashgabat. FlyDubai flies between Dubai and Ashgabat. Severe disruptions to air travel associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have affected both passenger and cargo flights. Consult the embassy website or individual air carriers for the latest information.

Within the country, it is possible to fly to Balkanabat, Dashoguz, Mary, Turkmenabat, and Turkmenbashi. Road conditions in Turkmenistan can make driving difficult and dangerous. Most roads outside of major cities are narrow, riddled with potholes, poorly lit, and do not have proper road signs. Driving at night on these roads should be avoided. City roads are better in comparison but may be hazardous due to potholes, uncovered manholes, poor lighting, and pedestrian traffic. Pedestrians frequently cross streets in heavy traffic, and drivers often make sudden stops in the right lane as they pick up and drop off passengers. Traffic accidents involving serious injuries are common.

In general, visitors should use extra caution when driving in Turkmenistan. Drivers pay little attention to lanes and other road markings, with weaving and sudden lane changes (usually without use of a turn signal) a common occurrence. It is not unusual to encounter cars going the wrong way on one-way streets or divided highways. Cars also frequently make left turns from the right lane and vice versa. Pedestrians regularly walk or stand in the middle of busy streets during the day and night, often without paying attention to oncoming traffic. Roadside assistance does not exist in Turkmenistan, where vast stretches of highway are often unmarked. Travelers with smartphones are recommended to download the app MAPS.ME and then download the Turkmenistan map prior to traveling.

The U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat has received reports that police stationed at checkpoints arbitrarily pull over and fine motorists. Because of the lack of reliable local transportation, visitors and new arrivals may find it convenient to hire a local driver. These drivers are usually relatively inexpensive. Arrangements can be made at most hotels. Taxis are also available in Ashgabat and are inexpensive.

### **Language**

Turkmen is the official language of Turkmenistan and is slowly displacing Russian as the common vernacular; however, Russian is widely used in government and business. The government has decreed that English be taught in schools widely, but only a limited number of people in Turkmenistan speak English.

### **Health**

It is extremely difficult to obtain accurate information or data regarding the presence or prevalence of COVID-19 in Turkmenistan. In general, health care does not meet Western standards. Disclaimer: U.S. Embassy Ashgabat assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the medical professionals, medical facilities, or air ambulance services whose names appear on the following lists. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the medical professional, medical facility, or air ambulance service.

**International Trauma Hospital**, 118, Gorogly Street, Ashgabat Telephone: 34-14-29

**Ashgabat City Children’s Hospital**, 29, Garaja Burunow St. (formerly known as Children’s Hospital on Shaumyan St.), Ashgabat Telephone: 92-67-21

**Physiology Scientific Clinical Center’s Hospital** (former Railroad Hospital), 60, Magtymguly Avenue, Ashgabat; Telephone: 94-24-87; 94-00-89

**Cardiology Scientific Clinical Center’s Hospital** (former Red Cross Hospital), 192, Atamurat Niyazov Avenue, Ashgabat; Telephone: 97-13-79

**Scientific-Clinical Center on Maternal and Child Health**, 80, Gorogly Street, Ashgabat Telephone: 97-21-73

**National Clinical Hospital named after S. Niyazov** (formerly known as Treatment and Consultation Clinical Center named after S. Niyazov at the 11<sup>th</sup> micro-district), 11, Oguzhan Street, Ashgabat; Telephone: 43-85-27

**International Eye Clinic**, 27, 1970 Street, Berzengi, Ashgabat; Telephone: 48-94-23

**Dental Clinic**, 25, 1970 Street, Berzengi, Ashgabat; Telephone: 48-71-05

**International Cardiology Center** (formerly known as International Cardiology Center named after S. Niyazov), 30, 1970 Street, Berzengi, Ashgabat; Telephone: 48-90-09

**Maternal and Child Health Center “Ene Mahri”** (“Mother’s Love), 30, 1970 Street, Berzengi, Ashgabat; Telephone: 48-93-03

### **Sanitary Aviation of the Ministry of Health of Turkmenistan**

Dr. Dovran Saparovich; Telephone: 93-82-12

Monday through Saturday (working hours) 97-07-30 - numbers for emergency medical evacuation from different areas of the country.

**Ambulance Services Government Ambulance Service** Telephone: 03.

### **Pharmacies**

Andalyp street, 15 (former Mira street, based in Burgan store), telephone 94-63-03,

Gorogly street, 29 (former Pervomayskaya street, just across the Student Polyclinic), telephone 92-03-03.

Azadi, 65 (based in Ovadan Center), telephone 93-01-85.

Sona Myradowa street, 2 (former Stepana Razina Street), telephone 28-63-44.

### **Medical Evacuations**

The following is a list of companies that can assist U.S. citizens with medical evacuations. Please be aware that the Embassy cannot provide administrative assistance, such as airport and flight clearance assistance, for private medical evacuations.

Delta Consulting Moscow, Telephone: +7 (495) 937-64-77

Geneva SOS Emergency, Telephone: +41 (22) 785-6464

SOS Philadelphia, emergency number for the home office: +1 (215) 244-1500.

International SOS Alarm Center, Moscow, Telephone: (+7-495) 937-64-77, E-mail:  
mowopsmed@internationalsos.com

### **AEA International Worldwide emergency assistance (in Almaty, Kazakhstan):**

Dr. Francois Gourraud, Medical Director for Central Asia

Telephone: (+7-327) 258-19-11; doctor on call at (+7-300) 744-11-11.

### **Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays**

Local time is five hours ahead of GMT (Zulu) or 9-10 hours ahead of the U.S. east coast, depending on spring or fall scheduling.

Businesses are generally open from 9am to 6pm, Monday through Friday, with many employees in the public and private sectors working a ¾ day on Saturdays.

2020 Turkmenistan Holidays:

January 1	New Year's Day
March 8	International Women's Day
March 21–22	National Spring Holiday
May 18	Constitution Day and National Flag Day
September 27	Independence Day
October 6	National Commemoration day
December 12	Neutrality Day

The dates of two additional national holidays, Oraza Bairam and Kurban Bairam, are determined by the lunar calendar and announced by Turkmen Government as non-working days. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, then the following working day usually becomes a holiday.

### **Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings**

Turkmenistan customs authorities may enforce strict regulations concerning temporary import into, or export from, Turkmenistan of items such as carpets, jewelry, musical instruments, pieces of art, archaeological artifacts, antiques, and protected animals. It is advisable to contact the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Washington for specific information regarding customs requirements. Travelers who wish to take carpets out of Turkmenistan must obtain a certificate from the Carpet Museum in Central Ashgabat indicating that the carpet does not have historical value. In addition, buyers may have to pay a tax calculated according to the size of the carpet. Travelers who have purchased other items that could be perceived to be of historical value, such as jewelry, have also reported difficulties in taking these items out of Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan's indigenous dog, the Alabay, is considered a national treasure and cannot be exported without prior permission. U.S. citizens should also check to ensure that any item they intend to bring into the United States is permitted by U.S. customs regulations.

### **Travel Related Web Resources**

U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Consular Affairs (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>)

Turkmenistan Embassy in Washington, DC

<https://usa.tmembassy.gov/tm/en>

U.S. Embassy in Turkmenistan

<https://tm.usembassy.gov/>



## **Investment Climate Statement**

The U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statements provide information on the business climates of more than 170 economies and are prepared by economic officers stationed in embassies and posts around the world. They analyze a variety of economies that are or could be markets for U.S. businesses.

Topics include Openness to Investment, Legal and Regulatory systems, Dispute Resolution, Intellectual Property Rights, Transparency, Performance Requirements, State-Owned Enterprises, Responsible Business Conduct, and Corruption.

These statements highlight persistent barriers to further U.S. investment. Addressing these barriers would expand high-quality, private sector-led investment in infrastructure, further women's economic empowerment, and facilitate a healthy business environment for the digital economy. To access the ICS, visit the U.S. Department of State's [Investment Climate Statement](#) website.

## **Political Environment**

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link to the U.S. Department of State [Countries & Areas](#) website.